

POWER-MAN

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™



25¢

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JUNE

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LUKE CAGE, POWER MAN

BACK
OFF,
BUSTER--OR
LUKE CAGE IS
CUTTIN'
LOOSE!

NO, MY FRIEND!
TODAY YOU WILL
EITHER JOIN THE
RINGMASTER'S
CIRCUS OF
CRIME--

--OR YOU
WILL BE
BURIED
BY US!

**CRIME
AND
CIRCUSES!**

LUKE CAGE: Wrongly convicted and sentenced to prison—reborn in a freak experiment there that gave him *steel-hard skin* and *strength beyond belief*—a man who hides his identity as an escaped convict in the role of a **HERO FOR HIRE!**

Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

LUKE CAGE, POWER MAN!

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CRIME and CIRCUSES

RIDDLE: WHAT DO YOU CALL A
POWERLESS POWER MAN?

ANSWER: DEAD! UNLESS
CLAIRE TEMPLE, THE WOMAN
HE LOVES, CAN GET HIM TO--

--SNAP
OUT OF IT,
LUKE!

FOR GOD'S
SAKE, YOU'VE
GOT TO SNAP
OUT OF IT!

AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO FIND OUT JUST HOW
ALL THIS CAME ABOUT (IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T
READ THE LAST ISSUE, A POSSIBILITY WE AT THE
BULLPEN JUST AREN'T READY TO ACCEPT) TURN
THE PAGE 'CAUSE WE'D LIKE TO RE-INTRODUCE YOU
TO A SWELL BUNCH OF CROOKS LED BY NONE
OTHER THAN...

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THE RINGMASTER!

AND THESE GOOD PEOPLE BEHIND ME ARE MY--SH--ASSOCIATES IN A SMALL BUSINESS VENTURE WE CALL THE CIRCUS OF CRIME!

A VENTURE THAT WILL PROVE MOST PROFITABLE, I'M SURE, NOW THAT WE HAVE TWO SUCH FINE ASSISTANTS AS POWER MAN AND GOLIATH* HELPING US--

--ALBEIT SOMEWHAT AGAINST THEIR WILLS, OF COURSE!

LUKE! HE'S GOT YOU AND BILL HYPNOTIZED!... YOU'VE GOT TO WAKE UP!

BECAUSE I'M JUST STARTING TO REALIZE THAT, EVEN THOUGH BILL IS MY EX-HUSBAND--

IT'S YOU I LOVE, LUCAS, SO PLEASE HONEY, SHAW YOURSELF OUT OF IT!

*WHUE! IT'S MINI-SYNOPSIS TIME AT MIGHTY MARVEL, GANG, AND THE BEST PLACE TO START IS WITH BILL TEMPLE, AKA THE NEW GOLIATH, WHO, AS TONY STARK'S RIGHT HAND MAN, IN THE CHEMISTRY DIVISION OF STARK INDUSTRIES, WAS ASKED BY STARK TO HELP THE AVENGER KNOWN AS GOLIATH FIND A WAY TO REVERSE THE PROCESS THAT HAD LEFT HANK PYM 10 FEET TALL AND GET HIM BACK TO NORMAL SIZE...

...AND BILL SUCCEEDED, BUT CONTINUED TO EXPERIMENT WITH PYM'S FORMULAE ON HIS OWN UNTIL AN ACCIDENT TRAPPED HIM AT THE HEIGHT OF 15 FEET! AND IF YOU THINK IT'S EASY RECAPING OUR LAST-MEN IN TWO CAPTIONS, THEN YOU TRY IT NEXT ISSUE, O.K. P-- LOVABLE LEN.

AND, TO INTRODUCE THE LAST OF OUR SUPPORTING
HEROES...

...MEET CAGE'S TRAVELLING
COMPANION, D.W. GRIFFITH.

HOO BOY, LUCAS! WE
COME RUNNIN' OUT TO
SUNNY CALIFORNIA SO
YOU CAN FIND CLAIRE--

--AND NO SOONER
DO WE GET HERE
THAN YOU AND HER
EX SET ABOUT
BEATING EACH
OTHERS HEADS
IN--

--AND THEN THE TWO
OF YOU GET WHAMMED BY
THE GUY IN THE FUNNY HAT!
MAYBE I SHOULD GO CALL A COP!

ENOUGH, WOMAN! EVEN IF
I HAD NOT HYPNOTIZED
POWER MAN--

--WHAT COULD HE OR
ANY OTHER HERO HOPE TO
DO AGAINST--

--LIVE WIRE, WHOSE
ELECTRIC LARIAT MOVES
WITH A DANGEROUS LIFE
ALL IT'S OWN'N'!

SHE
ALREADY GOT
A GLIMPSE OF
THAT, RING-
MASTER!

--OR THE GREAT
GAMBONNOS--!

--WHOVE A
REPUTATION FOR STEAL-
ING THE CROWNS OFF
THE CROWNED HEADS
OF EUROPE!

--OR PRINCESS PYTHON,
WHO IS AS COLD BLOODED
AND CRUEL AS HER SCALY
"PET"!

HE IS
SILENT NOW,
BUT NO LESS
DEADLY!

--OR FUNNY MAN, ONCE KNOWN
AS THE CRAFTY CLOWN!

HONK

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST,
WE HAVE STRONG MAN--

--WHOSE
ASTOUNDING
STRENGTH MAKES
UP FOR HIS RATHER
LIMITED INTEL-
LECTUAL CAPACITIES!



SO YOU SEE, DEAR LADY,
WITH POWER MAN AND
GOLIATH UNDER MY
CONTROL--

--WE ARE
VIRTUALLY
INVINCIBLE!



DO NOT FORGET, RING-
MASTER, THAT THE ONE
KNOWN AS POWER MAN
RISKED HIS LIFE TO SAVE
MINE*, AND THAT I OWE
HIM A DEBT OF HONOR--

* YOU GUESSED IT! LAST
ISH--LOOSE-ENDS LEN.

--A DEBT THAT WILL NOT
ALLOW HIM TO COME TO HARM
WHILE I LIVE!

AMHH, CAN IT, YUH
FLYN! FURRINER!

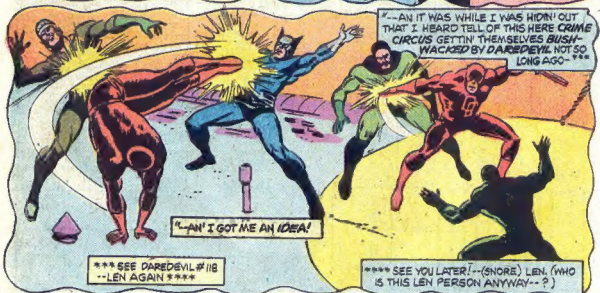
AN' LENME TELL THE
LITTLE LADY THE GOOD
PARTS, LIKE HOW I SAVED THE
LOT OF YUH FROM ROTTIN' IN SOME
STINKIN' PRISON!



"LIKE YUH BEEN HEARIN', MA'AM, THE HANDLE'S LIVE
WIRE, AN' I STARTED IN ON THIS KINDA WORK WHEN A
FELLER BY THE NAME OF PSYCHO-
MAN HIRED ME AN' A COUPLE 'A
OTHER GENTS TA HELP HIM POLISH
OFF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.**
WELL, THE MONEY WAS GOOD--

--BUT THEM OWLHOOTS OUTFOXED US!
I DIDN'T STICK AROUND TA FIND OUT WHAT
HAPPENED TA THE OTHERS. I BEAT IT
AND LAID LOW--

** SEE G.S. FANTASTIC
FOUR #5 -- LEN.

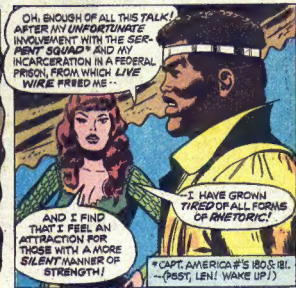
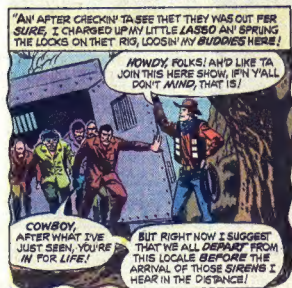
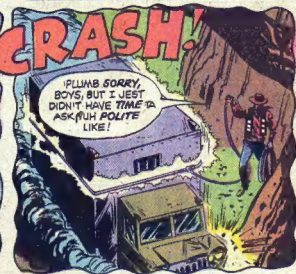
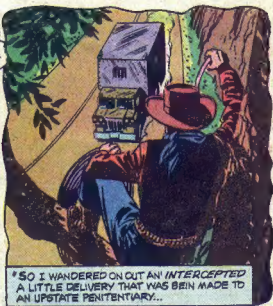
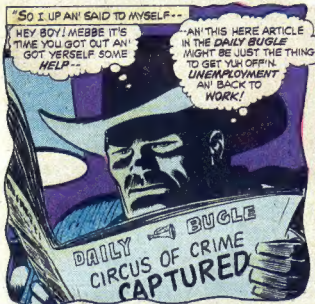


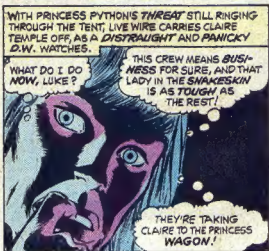
--AN IT WAS WHILE I WAS HIDIN' OUT
THAT I HEARD TELL OF THIS HERE CRIME
CIRCUS GETTIN' THEMSELVES BUSH-
WACKED BY DAREDEVIL NOT SO
LONG AGO--***

"--AN' I GOT ME AN IDEA!

*** SEE DAREDEVIL #118
--LEN AGAIN***

**** SEE YOU LATER!---(SHORE) LEN. (WHO
IS THIS LEN PERSON ANYWAY--?)







AND INSIDE THE AFOREMENTIONED WAGON...

THAT SHO' WAS FUNNY, MA'AM--

PUT HER DOWN ON THE BED, LIVE WIRE, WHILE I FIND SOME ROPE FOR OUR GUEST.

IT WILL MAKE HER FEEL MORE SECURE!

'SCUSE ME WHILE I GO ON OUTSIDE AN' LAUGH.

AN AMUSED SMILE ANIMATES PRINCESS PYTHON'S LIPS AS LIVE WIRE EXITS, SLAMMING THE WAGON DOOR BEHIND HIM.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YUH, BOY? WHAT DO YUH CARE HOW THIS BUNCH GETS THEIR KICKS, S'LONG AS THE MONEY'S GOOD!

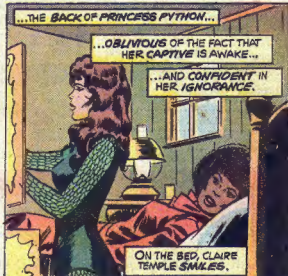
IT'S ALMOST AS IF THET LITTLE LADY ATTACKIN' THE PRINCESS THE WAY SHE DONE. SET SOMETHIN' OFF INSIDE 'A YUH!

NOW YUH STOP THET, CONBOY, AN' PAY ATTENTION TO THE JOB AT HAND.



WHILE, WITHIN THE WAGON, THE "LITTLE LADY" WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TURMOIL INSIDE LIVE WIRE'S MIND SLOWLY THROWS OFF THE EFFECT OF THE BLAST AND OPENS HER EYES...

...WHICH FALL ON A MOST WELCOME SIGHT...

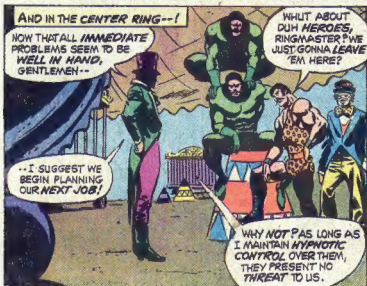


...THE BACK OF PRINCESS PYTHON...

...OBLIVIOUS OF THE FACT THAT HER CAPTIVE IS AWAKE...

...AND CONFIDENT IN HER IGNORANCE.

ON THE BED, CLAIRE TEMPLE SMILES.



AND IN THE CENTER RING--!

NOW THAT ALL IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS SEEM TO BE WELL IN HAND, GENTLEMEN--

--I SUGGEST WE BEGIN PLANNING OUR NEXT JOB!

WHUT ABOUT DUH HEROES, RINGMASTER? WE JUST GONNA LEAVE 'EM HERE?

WHY NOT? AS LONG AS I MAINTAIN HYPNOTIC CONTROL OVER THEM, THEY PRESENT NO THREAT TO US.



AND BACK TO OUR HARRIED HERO-HELPER WHO'S JUST HAD A BRILLIANT--

--IDEA!

D.W., YOU DOPE, WHY DIDN'T YOU THINK OF THAT BEFORE?

IF I CAN GET MY HANDS ON THE RINGMASTER'S HAT, I CAN SNAP LIKE AND THE BIG GUY OUT OF THE TRANCE THEY'VE GOT THEM IN!

AND AS THE CIRCUS OF CRIME DEPARTS, EACH MEMBER TO HIS OWN COMPARTMENT TO READY THEMSELVES FOR WHAT THEY EACH KNOW WILL BE AN INTENSE PLANNING SESSION...

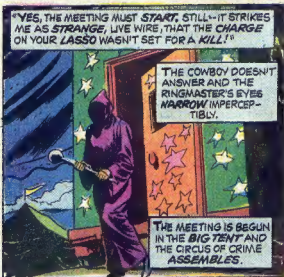
...THE RINGMASTER OF THIS TREACHEROUS TROUPE GOES HIS OWN WAY, UNAWARE THAT HE IS BEING SILENTLY FOLLOWED...

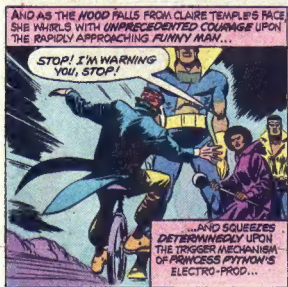
...BY LUKE CAGE'S EVERY-MAN, D.W. GRIFFITH!

MAN, THIS IS JUST LIKE ON FILM!

THE HERO SLIPS QUIETLY THROUGH THE DENSE JUNGLE UNDER-GROWTH, HIS EVERY SENSE ALERT TO THE DANGER OF A SHIFTING WIND OR A SNAPPING TWIG! AND THEN--

--WHEN HE'S SURE THAT HIS PREY IS OBVIOUS TO HIS PRESENCE--







BUT THOUGH SHE HAS JUST DISCOVERED A HIDDEN BRAVERY WITHIN HERSELF, CLAIRE TEMPLE HAS NOT THROWN HER INTELLIGENCE OUT THE DOOR...

...AND SHE'S SMART ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT AN ELECTRO-PROD WON'T HOLD HER ENEMIES OFF FOR LONG!

OH, LUKE, I HOPE THIS WORKS--



WHACK!

--BECAUSE IF IT DOESN'T, HONEY, WE'RE DONE FOR!



IT WORKS

WHAT'S GOIN' ON AROUND HERE?

NO, DON'T BOTHER EXPLAININ' IT TO ME, BABY--

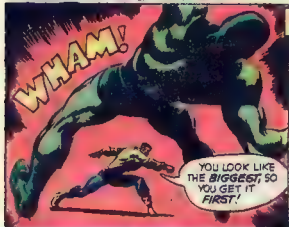


--'CAUSE THE PICTURE'S COMIN' IN LOUD AND CLEAR!

CHECK T OUT, YOU JOKERS--

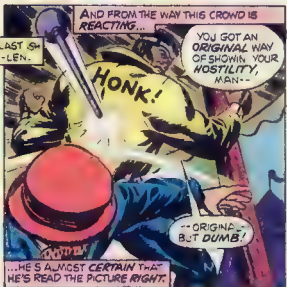
--POWER MAN'S BACK!

ALTHOUGH HE'S NOT QUITE SURE WHAT'S GOING DOWN HERE--SINCE THE LAST THING HE REMEMBERS IS SUGGING IT OUT WITH CLAIRE'S EX-HUSBAND--



WHAM!

YOU LOOK LIKE THE BIGGEST, SO YOU GET IT FIRST!



AND FROM THE WAY THIS CROWD IS REACTING...

YOU GOT AN ORIGINAL WAY OF SHOWIN' YOUR HOSTILITY, MAN--

HONK!

--ORIGINAL BUT DUMB!

...HE'S ALMOST CERTAIN THAT HE'S READ THE PICTURE RIGHT.

CERTAINLY TURNS TO **SURPRISE** AS HE RECOGNIZES THE BALEFUL GLARE IN **FUNNY MAN'S** EYES AS A LOOK OF **TRIUMPH**...



CHOKES!
--GAS!

HONK!

AND THE DEADLY BLACK VAPOR POURS HUNGRILY OVER HIM FROM THE TIP OF THE CAPRICIOUS CLOWN'S **HORN-CANE**...

...BLINDING **POWER MAN** JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR EVEN THE **SLOW-WITTED STRONG MAN** TO THROW HIS MASSIVE ARMS ABOUT **LUKE CAGE**...



YUH
HAD YOUR
CHANCE,
HERO--

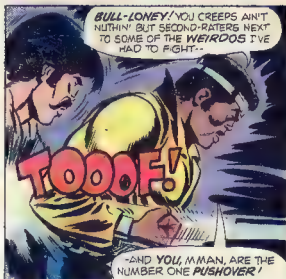
...AND BEGIN TO **SQUEEZE!**

UNGHH!

--AND
YUH BLEW
IT!

YUH AIN'T GETTIN'
ANOTHER ONE!

BULL-LONEY! YOU CREEPS AIN'T NUTHIN' BUT **SECOND-RATERS** NEXT TO SOME OF THE **WEIRDOS** I'VE HAD TO FIGHT--



TOOOOF!

--AND YOU, M'MAN, ARE THE
NUMBER ONE **PUSHOVER!**

MEANWHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY, AS THEY SAY IN HOLLYWOOD...

BE STILL, SEÑORITA, ELSE
LUIGI WILL BE **FORCED**
TO ENTER THIS FIGHT--

A THING I MAY NOT DO
UNTIL MY **DEBT** IS RE-
PAID TO YOUR **POWER-**
MAN!



LUKE! LOOK
OUT FOR
THE CLOWN!

THANKS, LADY, BUT
OL' **FUNNY FACE** OF
FUNNY MAN OR WHAT-
EVER THIS **JOKER'S**
HANDLE IS--

--IS JUST ABOUT AS
MUCH TO **WORRY**
ABOUT AS THE REST
OF HIS FRIENDS WERE--

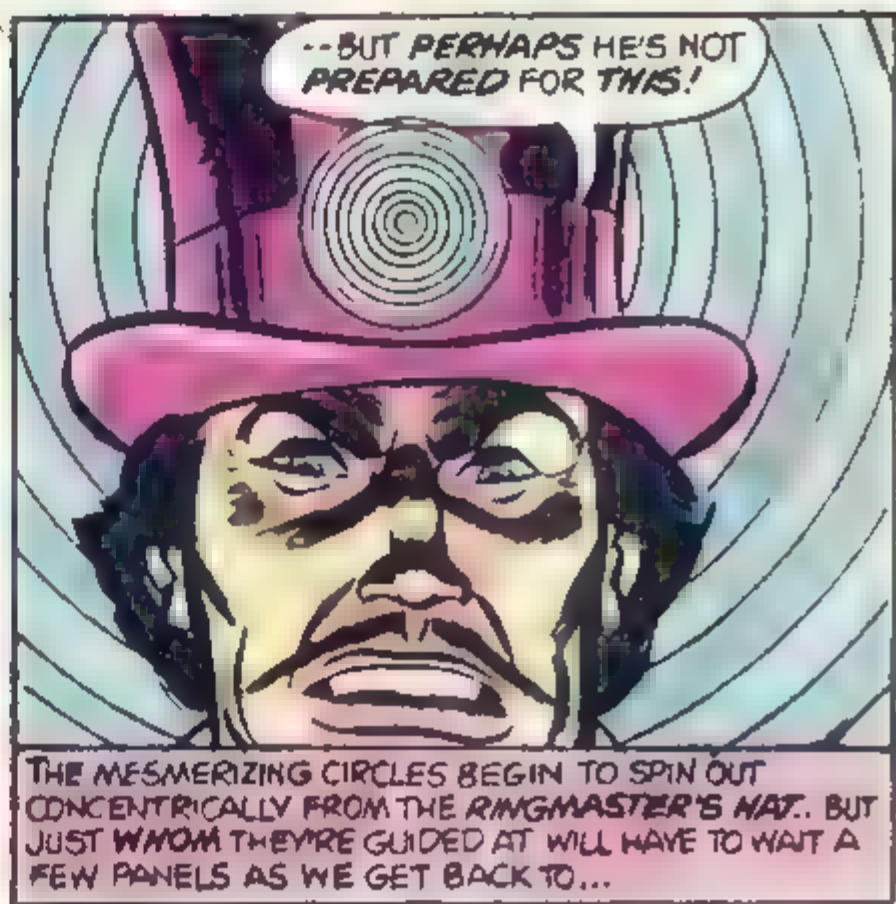
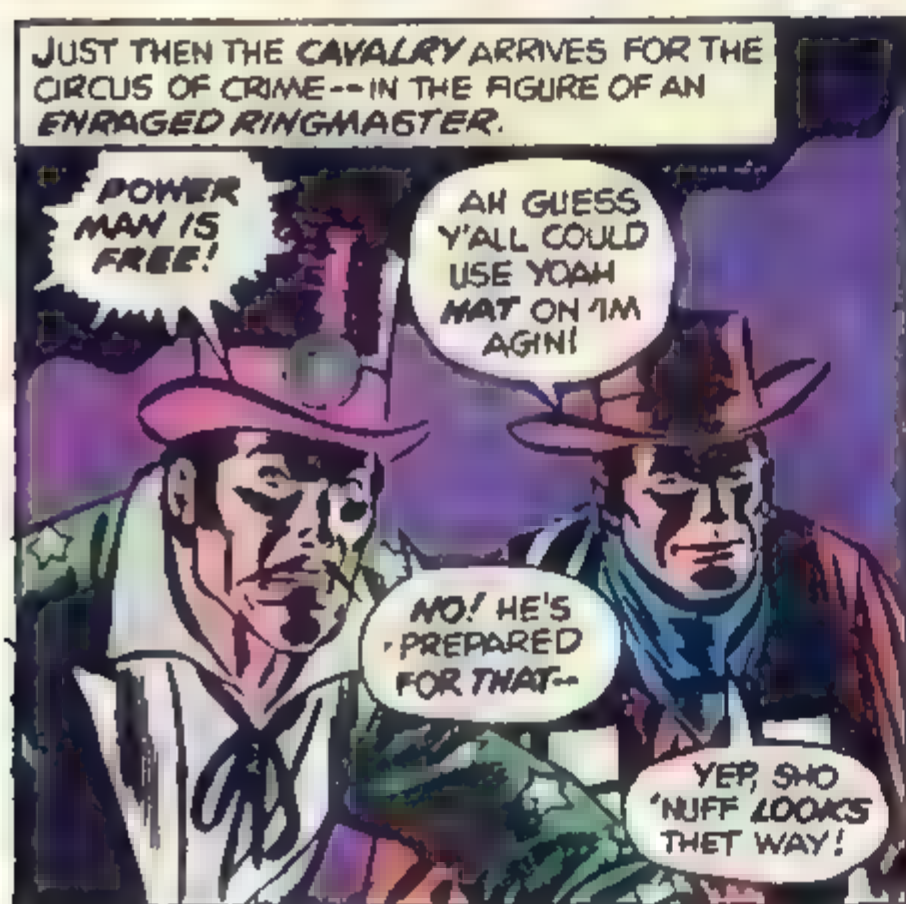
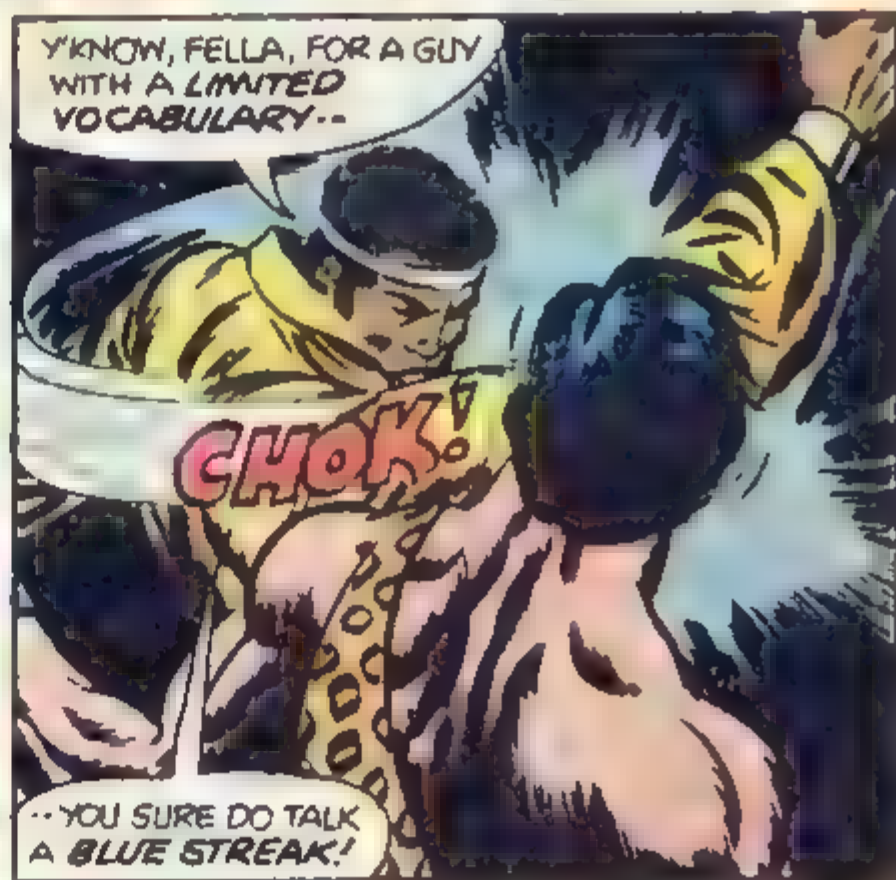
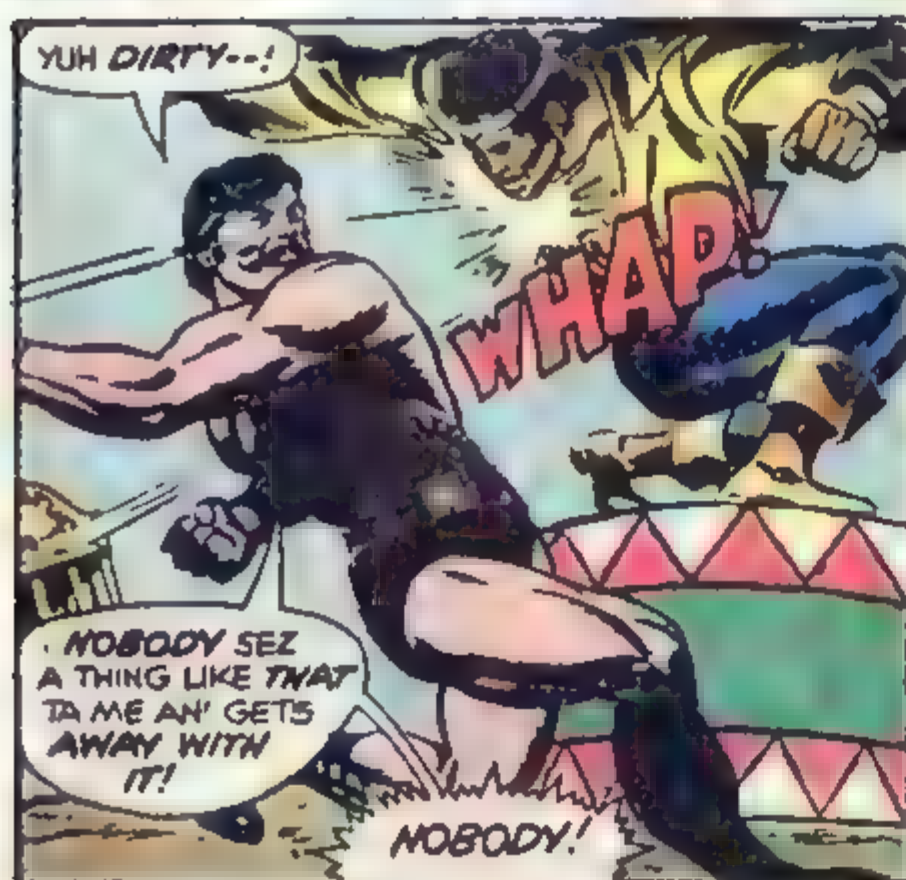
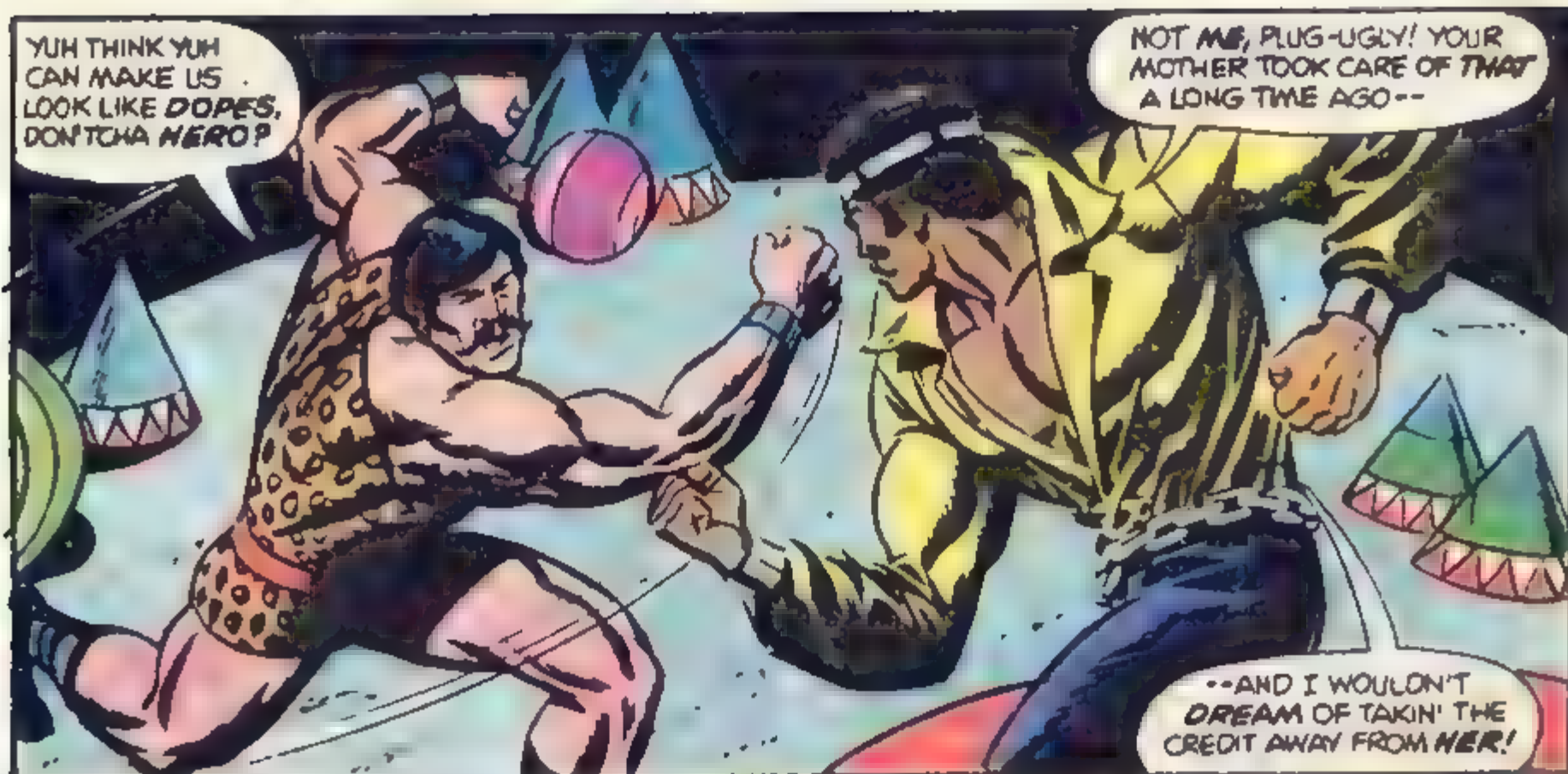


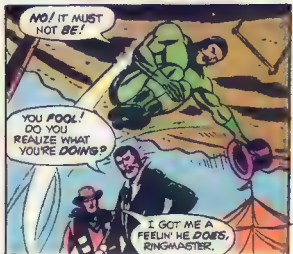
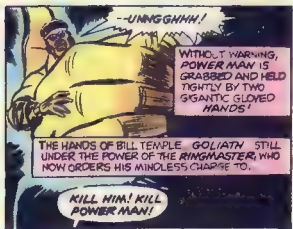
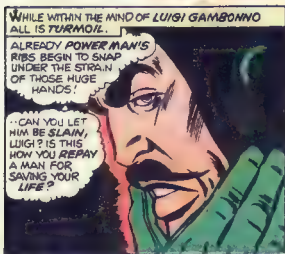
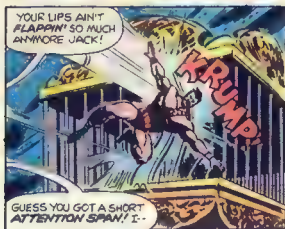
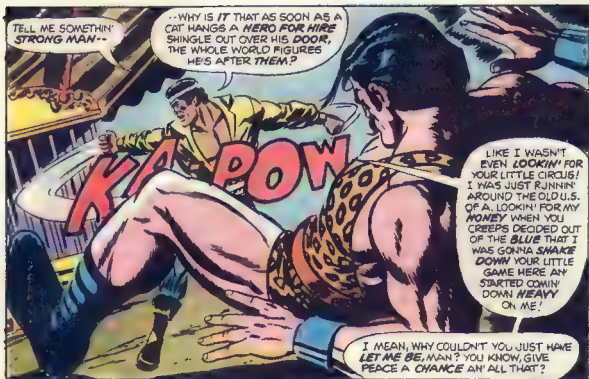
KA-WOK!

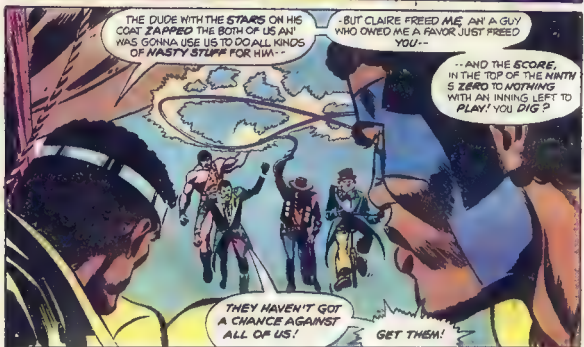
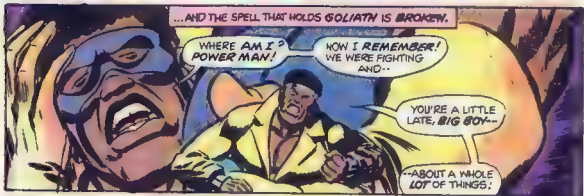
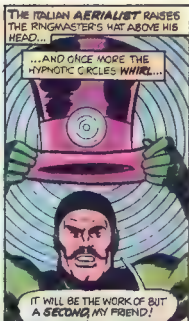
--WHICH MEANS
NO WORRY
AT ALL!

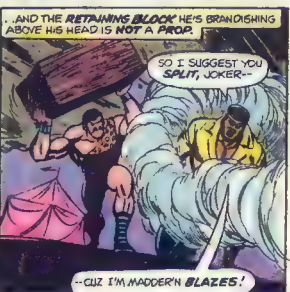
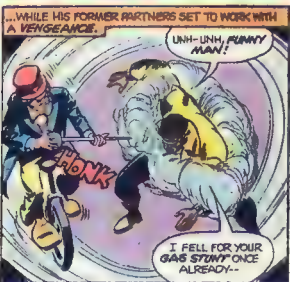
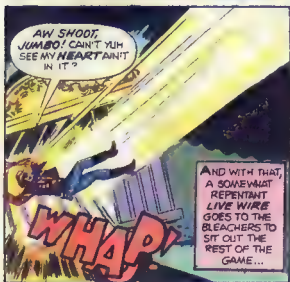
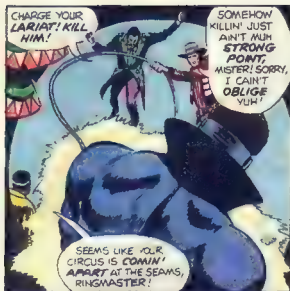
SOME **CREW!** I COULD **WHUP**
THIS BUNCH IN MY **SLEEPAN!**
NOT LOSE COUNT OF A
SINGLE **SLEEP!**













AND THE DISSENSION THAT IS SPLITTING THE RANKS OF THE CIRCUS OF CRIME SPREADS TO THE GREAT GAMBONNOS HIGH ABOVE THE SAW-DUST AMONG THE LINES OF THE TRAPEZE...

YOU HAVE BETRAYED US, MY BROTHER, AND YOU HAVE SHAMED ME AS WELL!

HONOR DEMANDED IT, ERNESTO, BUT HONOR IS NOW SATISFIED!

IF IT IS TO BE, THEN I WILL AVENGE THE OTHERS FOR THEIR DEFEAT--

--OR FALL IN THE ATTEMPT!

YOU GOT HIM, CAGE!

THAT'S AT LEAST TWO OF THESE CRUDS DOWN FOR THE COUNT!

BUT SO ABSORBED IS BILL TEMPLE IN OBSERVING ALL THIS VIOLENCE THAT IS STILL NOT A PART OF HIS LIFE...

POK!

...THAT IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE WHEN HE HEARS THE SOUND OF THE BODY BEHIND HIM CUTTING SWIFTLY THROUGH THE AIR...

...AND BY THE TIME HE RECOGNIZES WHAT IT MEANS, THERE COMES THE INEVITABLE...

...IMPACT!

I AM NO DAVID, MY GARGANTUAN FRIEND--

--BUT LIKE THE FIRST GOLIATH, YOU WILL FALL JUST AS HARD!

MY BROTHER--
LOOK OUT!

BUT AS HE GOES DOWN, THE MASSIVE HAND OF BILL TEMPLE REACHES OUT...

...THERE IS A MUFFLED SCREAM...

...AND IT WILL BE SOME TIME TO COME BEFORE LUIGI GAMBONNO AND ERNESTO, HIS BROTHER, TAKE TO THE TRAPEZE AGAIN.

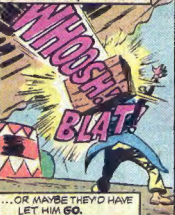
WHICH SUITS THE FLEEING **FUNNY MAN** JUST FINE.

FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW THE WHOLE THING WAS A **WASH-UP** FROM THE DAY THEY'D GOTTEN INTO TROUBLE WITH **SPIDER-MAN**.

* **SPIDEY**
#16.--
LEN.

...AND NO MATTER WHETHER HE CALLED HIMSELF **THE CLOWN** OR **KING KONG**, HE JUST CAN'T SEE HOW THINGS COULD POSSIBLY BE ANY DIFFERENT.

A **PITY** THAT HE HASN'T COMMUNICATED HIS THOUGHTS TO HIS **OPPONENTS**, HOWEVER...



...OR MAYBE THEY'D HAVE LET HIM GO.

THERE'S STILL **HOPE!**

LUIGI DROPPED MY HAT! IF I CAN REACH IT WE'VE--

LIKE **FUNNY MAN** SAID, **RING-MASTER**, A **WASH-UP**.

NOT SO **FAST**, **TALL DARK**, AND **OLDY**.

YOU'RE THE **BRAINS** OF THIS **OUTFIT**--SO TO **SPEAK**--

WAIT! YOU DON'T **KNOW** WHAT YOU'RE--

ALL **CONTRAIRE**, **MONSIEUR**--

WHICH MEANS, THE **JIG'S UP!**

THE **CIRCLES** GO 'ROUND AND 'ROUND...

...AND THEY COME OUT **HERE**.

HEY! IT **WORKED!**

SO MUCH FOR THE **BRAINS** OF THE **OUTFIT**.

WHICH LEAVES ONLY ONE MEMBER **UNACCOUNTED FOR**...

PRINCESS PYTHON!

NO! THE **RINGMASTER'S HAT!**

TURN IT OFF BEFORE--

YER. THOSE OLD **CIRCLES** AGAIN.

WHOOOPS! I DIDN'T MEAN TO **ZAP HER**, BUT I GUESS IT'S JUST AS **WELL** **THOUGH**.

LOOKS LIKE **LUKE** AND **GOLIATH** 'VE GOT THE **REST** OF THE **GANG** IN **TOW**, SO I GUESS IT'S **ALL OVER!**

EXCEPT FOR THE FINAL MOP UP, WHICH IS LEFT FOR THOSE BOYS IN BLUE INSIDE THE CARS WITH THE CHERRY ON TOP...

...WHO ARE ONLY TOO GLAD TO PACK OFF THE RING-MASTER AND THE NOW-SUBDUED CIRCUS OF CRIME TO A PLACE WHERE THEY WON'T BE MISSED FOR A LONG, LONG TIME.

AND WHO KNOWS--MAYBE IN A YEAR OR TWO, AFTER A FEW BENEFIT PERFORMANCES FOR THEIR FELLOW INMATES, THE OLD CIRCUS WILL GET BACK OUT ON THE ROAD AGAIN, ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY...

...ALTHOUGH FROM THE LOOKS THE CONSCIOUS MEMBERS ARE GIVING EACH OTHER NOW, THE PROSPECT SEEMS DOUBTFUL.

AND THEIRS AREN'T THE ONLY REUNIONS THAT ARE IN QUESTION.

I GUESS IT'S NOT GOING TO BE THE-- THE SAME ANYMORE, IS IT, CLAIRE?

I MEAN--

NO, BILL, IT'S NOT GOING TO BE THE SAME.

I GUESS I REALIZED WHEN I CHOSE TO SAVE LUKE FIRST, INSTEAD OF YOU, THAT HE'D KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THE SITUATION--ANY SITUATION.

WE'RE A LOT ALIKE, HE AND I. WE KNOW HOW TO TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES--OF EACH OTHER.

YEAH. I UNDERSTAND.

SO LONG--

I LIKE YOU A LOT, BILL, BUT I CAN'T FEEL ABOUT YOU THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT HIM.

--CLAIRE.

C'MON, HONEY. WE GOT US A WHOLE MESS OF TALKIN' TO CATCH UP ON.

LET'S SAVE THE TALKING FOR LATER, O.K., LUKE?

I MEAN, FIRST THINGS FIRST.

YEAH BABY, I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN!

A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN ONE DAY, TOO MUCH FOR PEOPLE TO REMEMBER ALL THE LITTLE SIDELINE THINGS LIKE DANGER AND FEAR AND PAIN...

...YET, WHEN THE SUN'S GONE, THEY'LL HOLD ON TO SOME MOMENTS OF THE DAY, AND MAYBE SMILE, JUST A LITTLE...

...KNOWING THEY'VE GOT EACH OTHER.

THE END